

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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UNCLAS THESSALONIKI 0206

GENEVA PASS UNDRO

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SUBJECT: EARTHQUAKE SITREP NO.16

REF: THESSALONIKI 0202

1. TOMORROW IS THE FULL MOON AND TENSION IS
BUILDING UP, ALTHOUGH BECAUSE THERE HAVE BEEN NO
DISCERNIBLE TREMORS SINCE A MILD ONE LAST SATURDAY
MORNING, THE SITUATION IS NOT AS BAD AS HAD BEEN
ANTICIPATED. NEVERTHELESS, MANY PEOPLE DO BELIEVE
THE RUMORS CIRCULATING THAT A MAJOR QUAKE CAN BE
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EXPECTED DURING THE NEXT THREE DAYS BASED ON THE
FACT THAT THE MAY AND JUNE QUAKE OCCURRED DURING
PERIODS OF A FULL MOON.

2. THE GOG IS DOING EVERYTHING TO DISPEL THESE
RUMORS. PRIME MINISTER CARAMANLIS IS ARRIVING
TODAY TO SPEND THE NEXT THREE NIGHTS HERE, AND A

SERIES OF REASSURING ANNOUNCEMENTS IS BEING ISSUED. THE LATEST IS THAT QUAKES DO NOT NECESSARILY HAPPEN DURING PERIODS OF A FULL MOON, AS EVIDENCED BY THE MOST RECENT STRONG TREMOR OF 5 ON THE RICHTER SCALE WHICH OCCURRED JULY 5 WHEN THERE WAS NO MOON. MANY PEOPLE CONSIDER THIS LOGIC SMALL COMFORT.

3. THE PRIVATE SECTOR IS ALSO WORKING TO REASSURE PEOPLE AND KEEP THEM IN THE CITY. FOR EXAMPLE, THE LARGEST CHAIN OF CAFES IN THESSALONIKI -- TOTTIS-- HAS FRONT PAGE ADS IN BOTH OF TODAY'S MAJOR MORNING PAPERS INVITING EVERYONE TO A FREE PARTY TOMORROW EVENING AT ITS CAFE ON CENTRAL ARISTOTELOUS SQUARE.

4. THE CONSULATE GENERAL ISSUED AN ANNOUNCEMENT YESTERDAY THAT THE CONSULATE AND AMERICAN CENTER CONTINUE TO WORK NORMAL HOURS AND THAT THE AMERICAN STAFF REMAINS IN THE CITY AND LIVING IN THE CONSULATE BUILDING. THIS WAS IN RESPONSE TO RUMORS THAT THE AMERICANS WERE "PULLING OUT".

5. MORE ATTENTION IS NOW BEING PAID TO RECONSTRUCTION, BUT IT IS UNLIKELY MUCH ACTUAL WORK WILL BE DONE UNTIL THE SITUATION QUITES UNCLASSIFIED

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DOWN FOR SOME TIME. THE TECHNICAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE HAS PREPARED A PAPER ON THE SUBJECT WHICH WE ARE TRANSLATING. BASICALLY, HOWEVER, IT SUGGESTS MORE DETAILED STUDIES ARE NEEDED. THE NOMARCHY HAS ESTABLISHED FIVE COMMITTEES TO DEAL WITH THE CURRENT SITUATION AND FUTURE RECONSTRUCTION EXAMINATIONS ARE CONTINUING OF ALL THE BUILDINGS IN THE AREA. AMONG THE VARIOUS RUMORS ABOUT RECONSTRUCTION IS ONE THAT A SPECIAL TAX OF ONE DRACHMA PER LITTER OF GASOLINE WILL BE IMPOSED TO FINANCE IT. ANOTHER IS THAT 400 TO 500 MILLION DRACHMAS WILL BE MADE AVAILABLE AS SPECIAL RECONSTRUCTION GRANTS OR LOANS. ZACHARY

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